

# PROPHETS AND PROPHECIES SERIES

## UNDERSTANDING PROPHECY

Acts 2:16 *but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel; "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, yes, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall turn into darkness and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and manifest day. And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

When the Spirit comes on all flesh your sons and daughters shall prophesy; young men shall see visions, old men dream dreams. In our teaching series on dreams, we have seen how the word *dream* here is not a normal Greek word for dream but a special Greek word *enupnion* that speaks about God's will and God's revelation that have sunken deep into the sub-consciousness of people. We have seen also that sons and daughters, young men and old men refer to spiritual age. In each spiritual age, there are some things that you perfect in your life. *Old men* refer to those who are spiritually matured. The word *dreams* or *enupnion* is the word that talks about the fullness of that vision and the fullness of the revelation in your life in both your conscious and subconscious mind. You are so saturated with the knowledge of God's will to the extent that you are aware constantly even in your sub-conscious level. *Young men* is the phase in our spiritual life where we learn to be sensitive to the leadings of the Holy Spirit in the area of our inner vision.

In order to understand prophecy, we need to see that the word *prophecy* is sometimes used generally and sometimes specifically in the bible. The word *prophecy* in the bible is used generally for all vocal utterances. It is used specifically under the gift of prophecy to refer to a gift and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. And this phrase, gift of prophecy includes both. It includes the function of the gift but more generally, it talks about the development of prophetic utterances. In the

Old Testament, you read about the prophets prophesying and speaking divine utterances. We understand that prophesying can sometimes give forth the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, which they do it in the Old Testament. If they predict some thing in the future, it actually includes the word of wisdom. But the word prophecy is used generally in the bible sense to refer to any ecstatic utterances that comes forth through a control of the Holy Spirit. And the word prophecy includes also psalms, hymns, and divine utterances in songs that may have some content of revelation. It is not just a simple gift of prophecy in the bible where it only comforts exhorts and edifies. It should do all those three things. But it has a quality of revelation to it.

When the soldiers blindfolded Jesus in His trial and slapped Him, they said, "Prophecy to us - who slapped You?" They are using the word *prophecy* in general. They are asking Jesus to tell them who slapped Him. It's a ridiculous situation. That's not the place the Lord will want to function in any gift of the word of knowledge.

What we are looking is a general function of the word prophecy and all it covers. Prophecies, just like visions and dreams, are experiences that every Christian to a certain extent, have experienced. You may not experience the gift of prophecy. But you will experience the area of general prophecy as you yield yourself to the Holy Spirit. In order to understand it fully we need to understand the four characteristic of prophecy. There are four basic characteristics to all general prophecy. These apply to general prophecy and these apply also to the gift of prophecy and in the other revelation gifts like word of wisdom, word of knowledge. They may come forth in prophetic utterances. The four characteristic of the general prophecy can be found in the bible and a lack of knowledge of them can cause us to misunderstand the function of prophecy and purpose of prophecy. All of us to a certain extend can learn to prophesy as we have seen in I Corinthians 14.

## **Prophecy is Fractional**

Let's give some scriptures. Lets look first at I Cor. 13:9 *For our knowledge is imperfect; and our prophecy is imperfect.* One of the first characteristics of prophecy is that it is fractional. It is in part. No person has the totality of what God is saying to the body of Christ. Prophecy is given in part. Now there are two ways it can be fractional. One is the speaker. The one who speaks has part of the revelation that God is

bringing forth. And you can see here that Paul speaks about prophecy in general in I Cor. 13 because it ties up in verse two the gift of prophecy. In fact, the word *gift* is not mentioned in the Greek. I Cor. 13:2 says, Though I have *the gift of* prophecy. Notice in the New King James it would put the words *the gift of* in italics. The words *gift of* is not in the original Greek. I Cor. 13:2 *And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge.* Notice he ties up general prophecy to understanding mysteries. The gift of prophecy has no revelation involved. It is only to comfort, exhort and edify. But general prophecy covers revelation. And general prophecy can be learned.

The bible says in I Cor. 14:24 *But if all prophesy* Paul is talking about every one prophesying. Doesn't that contradict with I Cor. 12 where he says to some are given this gift and that gift so not everybody manifest all the gifts at one time. It doesn't contradict. Paul is talking about two different aspects of prophecy. One is the general prophecy and the other is the gift of prophecy which some have. It's just like tongues. Paul talks about both in Corinthians. He said I would that you all speak in tongue. The word *speak in tongue* has more reference to every one being able to communicate with God. Then he turns around in I Cor. 12 he says, *Do all speak with tongues?* At first, it seems to contradict but if you rightly divide the Word, clearly there is no contradiction. Paul was talking on one hand about general speaking in tongue to God. The gift of tongue is God speaking through us, which not all have. So, the gift of prophecy is something not every body has. But general prophecy can be developed.

So Paul says in I Cor. 14:24 *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, see every body is doing it. He is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed.* So here, we see that there is revelation involved. The secrets of a person's heart are revealed. Notice that in the verses that we have read prophecy is fractional in two ways. No. 1 the one who prophesy does not understand all that he or she prophesies. So, to the person who is speaking he is speaking in part. He only has part of the knowledge of God to speak forth.

The other way it can be fractional is where to reveal one object. God uses different instruments like in I Cor. 14 the same revelation is given in part, one here and one there to the whole body. Then Paul says all prophesy then the secrets of the person's heart are revealed.

So there are two ways it can be fractional. One is that God can give you a bit at a time, line upon line, and precept upon precept. He can give you a prophetic utterance and after that, He continues some time later. And as time goes on, He gives you a little bit more. As more and more prophecies are given to you, you find the mysteries unfolding. It's just like doing the jigsaw puzzle by yourself. The other way you could do the jigsaw puzzle is to give everybody a piece and everybody come together and fit it in. So there are two ways you could play the jigsaw puzzle, as a team or as an individual. Of course as an individual, it may take a little bit longer.

Prophecy is fractional and because it is fractional the quality of prophecy is such that on the first way it comes is that the person who speaks it have to require faith to bring forth the utterance to some of the things that he or she doesn't even understand.

Lets look at some of the ways the Old Testament prophets brought forth fractional prophecies. In the book of I Peter 1:10 *The prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired about the salvation; they inquired what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when predicting the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which have not been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

It tells us that even the angels desired to look into the things that were spoken by these men. And some of these men have prophecies a little bit at a time and they see the whole picture come clearer and clearer. Sometimes, the different prophets put the whole jigsaw puzzle together. We need to understand that in order to co-operate with the different prophets and Christians who may contribute their piece of prophecy to the overall picture you are getting from God.

Now there are four characteristics and each characteristic will lead the other. You have to understand the first before you go to the second and then the third and then the fourth. Each inter-links with one another. For example even in the book of Acts itself the very text where we take this teaching series, there are some prophecies recorded there. Notice how David spoke about the Lord in Acts 2: 25 about the Lord being at his right hand and he will not leave his soul in Hades in verse 27. That is a

prophecy about Jesus dying on the cross. Then in verse 34 when he says David did not ascend into heaven; but he himself says; "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand," is from a different Psalms. There are two Psalms involved one is Psalms 16 the other is Psalms 110. These Psalms are placed together to give one whole picture about Jesus Christ. It is the same person prophesying. So, prophecy can come in parts. This means that when we began to move into that general area of prophecy, we learn to prophesy in parts.

In our own personal life we need to take note of some of the things that God is speaking to us for they will be added line upon line, precept upon precept. Sometimes the problem is that when God has spoken some thing and one month later, He speaks some thing that continues on that which you have forgotten the first one, we end up going through life without getting the jigsaw puzzle of God's direction in our life fitted together. It's just like I give you a present of a jigsaw puzzle but I don't give you all the pieces at once. I give you one piece and say I'll give you another later. Hold fast to the piece and study it very carefully. So, you hold fast to that piece and studied it very carefully. But then you forget about it. You left it somewhere. Then some time along the way I give you another piece. If you lost one piece and you have an additional piece, you still have one piece. Then further along the way, you misplaced the second piece somewhere and you go on. So, you have minus one piece. And now I give you one more piece. So, you have plus one piece back again. And again, you have one piece. And you go all through life and say I wonder why I don't seem to gather the whole thing together. Even Paul told Timothy to remember the prophecies that were uttered in his life that he may wage a good warfare. If a piece of the jigsaw was given to you and you kept it and studied it carefully, and the second piece is given you locked it together with the first. You would have two. And as it goes along another precept comes, another line comes, and you add it here is three.

Lets look a Paul's instruction to Timothy how important it is to remember prophecy. In I Tim., 4:14 *Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.*

Paul told Timothy to meditate on the prophecies that were given. As an individual, we need to do that. And in the same manner, corporately prophecy could come in parts. Remember it always does come in parts. It's one of the laws of prophecy coming. It always comes in parts and you don't have the whole picture at one time.

And too many people take that one picture and say, "Praise the Lord I have got it." They have only got one part and they run away with it. You find them in the mud pool somewhere.

So here, God says it is only given in parts. One of its qualities of prophecies is that it is fractional. It is one of the laws of prophecy that we must understand. Nobody has it all. And sometimes, we must open our ears to hear what God is saying through other people. Because other people may hold the other piece of the jigsaw puzzle to what God is saying to the whole body of Christ generally. For that reason if a pastor builds a church and just do not allow five-fold ministers to come in, that church will be malnourished. Because the church is only given one aspect of what God is saying to the church. Every member of the body of Christ should be encouraged to hear any five-fold ministry that they can piece it together the prophecy. In the same way, a pastor or minister that has his own little church and shut himself up from the other churches robs himself and becomes off tangent thinking that he has the whole. No man has the whole. Every one has in part to contribute to the whole. And all have to learn from one another to see the whole picture of what God's Spirit is saying to the churches. On the other hand, the pastor must exercise caution and discernment. He cannot be allowing every Tom, Dick and Harry who claims to be an apostle or prophet to minister to his flock. Some of them are ravaging wolves in sheep's clothing who may bring a spirit of strife and division to the congregation or who may make merchandise of the gospel while fleecing the flock.

## **Prophecy is Conditional**

So on the second point that we look here in prophecy is what we call conditional. All prophecies are conditional where a condition is given. That is astounding to us because people don't realize that all prophecies are conditional. We think that something is conditional only when a condition is given. Every prophecy is conditional and that is one of the laws that govern prophecy. I show you from the scriptures. When there is no condition given, yet it implies and between the lines, there is always a condition. The law of condition must guide all prophecies. It's conditioned because of Man has a free choice. God will honor the free choice of men. Because of this factor all prophecies that govern the lives of mankind and individual lives automatically becomes conditioned upon the response of man. There is no such thing as an absolute prophecy where there is no condition. Even when no condition is given, there is a condition, whether it's a judgmental prophecy or whether it is a

kind of a positive prophecy.

Let me go the negative and point to the positive. I Kings 21 tells the story of how Ahab together with Jezebel had just killed his neighbor Naboth. They both plotted it together. They did that so that Ahab could have his neighbor's vineyard. After he had done that, God sent His prophet Elijah the Tishbite to him. Elijah the Tishbite came and said in verse 17 *Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab the king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession. And you shall say to him, "Thus says the Lord, "Have you killed, and also taken possession?" And you shall say to him, "Thus say the Lord, in the place where..- this is the prophesying coming. It's a predictive thing. If you analyze it as gift of the Holy Spirit, you will classify it as a word of wisdom or judgment. But we analyze it now under general prophecy. Prophecy is generally speaking a vehicle. If it's hard to understand remember this: visions and dreams are vehicles. Vehicles mean that they are the mode by which you receive some thing. And you could receive a word of knowledge through vision. It was a word of knowledge but the vehicle was a vision. You could receive a word of wisdom through dream. The dream was a vehicle but the revelation involved was a word of wisdom. Prophesying is the spoken utterance. The general use of the word prophesying has to do with the supernatural utterance under the control of the Spirit. So there is a vehicle. Within it, it contains a revelation. And most of the time general prophecy contains revelation and it unfold some mysteries of God.*

Then in verse 20 *Ahab said to Elijah. "Have you found me O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do what is evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon you; I will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, bond or free, in Israel; and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nabat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the anger which you have provoked Me, and because you have made Israel to sin - etc.* There were all kinds of judgments. Then it says in verse 27. Now there is no condition given to the judgment. The way it's predicted it sounds as if it shall surely come kind. God didn't even say if you repent it wouldn't happen. It looks as if it is an unconditional judgment. All prophecies come under the law of human choice and human involvement. And all prophecies have an element of a condition.

Now whether the conditions are mentioned or not, Ahab did something, which was good. Verse 27 *And when Ahab heard those words, (See those words - words were given.*

When you dream a dream, you are unconscious and you see some sort of a picture. When you see a vision you are conscious and you see some revelation in picture form. When you have a prophetic utterance, you will have words that come to you.) *he rent his clothes, put sackcloth upon his flesh, fasted, lay in sackcloth, and went about dejectedly.* By the way, he was the most wicked man in the book of Kings. His wife was also the same. Look at what he did. He repented to a small extent. He showed that he was sorry that he took the vineyard. In our Old Testament study in the book of Kings, we have shown that basically Ahab was quite a nice guy. But he was weak willed and too easily influenced. And the big crook was his wife, Jezebel. She had Ahab under the her little finger. There are times Ahab seems to do quite nice things. He had a small little bit of sincerity in him. When Elijah challenged the false prophets Ahab was there. And he allowed the prophets to be killed. But when he went back his wife got angry. When a sincere and potentially good man with a weak will marries a wrong woman, disaster strikes.

God said these words to Elijah in verse 29 *Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days.* God didn't even give him a choice. But this is the law of prophecy. Many people don't realize it. They think that when some thing is prophesied, what was prophesied will come to pass. Whatever will be will be. But the law of prophecy is that it is always conditional whether it's mentioned or not. Prophetic utterance that is spoken is conditional. So here, we see that God said it. He said He is going to do some thing to that person for what he has done but there was repentance and change in the person's behavior. Thus, the judgment that has been prophesied has been averted by the repentance and change in that person. What caused the changed man's response? The second law that governs all prophecies is always conditional. The basis of this is man's free will.

(Interestingly, in 1999, Bob Jones received an angel who appeared to him in the appearance and attire of a Highway Patrolman. The angel declared that he was sent to remind us of the "Law of the Spirit of Life." Therefore, it was his obligation to read Bob his Biblical "Bill of Rights". The first right that the angel mentioned was this. *You have a right to mercy and forgiveness where you have sinned. You have a right to come boldly before the Throne of Grace to repent and when you have truly repented, then you have a right to the abundant Mercy of God. Mercy is not receiving what you do deserve.* For more of this, read Bob Jones' article [Our Biblical Bill of Rights](#). – Ed.)

Let's take an example. Even if God said a thousand nice things about you is going



to happen, you still got free choice to say no. And because of the free will of man, that itself makes it conditional.

In the book of Jonah, you would find in the story of Jonah how he went to Nineveh. At first, he went away and then God caused a big fish to swallow him. After he repented, the big fish vomited him on land and he was sent back to Nineveh. He landed finally submitting himself to the will of God. And this was the prophecy that he was going to bring to Nineveh. He went to Nineveh and said, "In forty days the city will be destroyed." Nineveh did not hear any conditions involved. Jonah did not say, "Turn to the Lord so you won't be destroyed. If you don't turn to the Lord, disasters will happen." There was no condition given. It looks like the good guys among the Ninevites had to pack their bags and leave if they want to escape the judgments. But every prophecy by the Spirit is conditional.

So here, in the book of Jonah, we see the response of the king. Jonah 3:5 *And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. Then tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles; Let neither man nor beast, herd or flock, taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God.*

Jonah didn't tell them they could do that. From the way the book of Jonah goes even if Jonah knew the secret of averting God's judgment, he wouldn't have told them. Yet, there is a human response to the predicted judgment. Man's free will changes things. And so when the king declared a total fast, no one was excluded - even the animals had to fast. This is serious - in forty days, they were going to be destroyed. Not only fast, the king said every one must wear sackcloth. I could see those sackcloth sellers having good business. Not only the people put on sackcloth the animals also had to wear sackcloth. If you were there that day, you would have gone to the city and see a dog passing by wearing sackcloth. For humbling themselves in fasting and sackcloth, God pardoned them.

Those who don't understand this second law don't understand the heart of God. See people like Eli didn't understand this. In I Samuel chapter two, the Lord called Samuel and the Lord gave him a prophecy in I Samuel chapter two. And the prophecy was negative. The prophecy speaks about what will happen to Eli and his

house. The prophecy predicted all kinds of disasters for Eli and his household. You know what Eli's response is. Like some of those people, he said, "Well if it is the Lord's will, that's it." He doesn't understand that all prophecy is conditional. If Eli had repented, we would have a different story. If Eli had understood one of the laws that govern prophetic utterance, he would turn to the Lord with all his heart. And God would have done some thing in his favor.

David fell into adultery and murder. God pronounced judgment on him. There was some thing he could avoid and there was some thing he could not. It was quite a blanket judgment. David understood the heart of God and the first thing he did was he fasted. He understood that whatever judgment is predicted it could be changed by coming to God in repentance. But for David, the child could not be saved. The child that was born in his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba died. And we know that the child that died is saved because David said, "I will go to the child and the child cannot come to me." So, that's the verse that tells you between the lines that the child is saved. The wonderful thing is that because of David's great repentance, God's pardon was so great that from David and Bathsheba relationship came the heir, Solomon. This relationship in the first place was never meant to be. Isn't the mercy of God marvelous? It was never God's intention. In no way can your mind conceive that it's God's will and God plan for David to commit adultery. But because of his response of repentance, God could wipe out the sin and forgive his iniquities provided he turned with all his heart to the Lord and doesn't turn back to the sinful ways. So, David understood the heart of God, which is why he went all the way, as much as he can.

And there are men in the bible from time to time that have understood this area of God's promises. We want to look into another instance found in II Sam. 7. Now this is a positive prediction. Part of the promises that was given to David in his early life when he walked right with God was in II Sam. 7 where it shows us that David wanted to build a house but the Lord didn't require of him and says his son was to be the one to build a house for God. But this was the special blessing that God gave to him. II Sam. 7:16 *And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me.* Now that was a promise that was given to David but you know that no conditions were attached. But David's sons didn't make it. They didn't walk right with God. And for them that wonderful promise and prophecy was cancelled. Thank God, for Jesus Christ that Jesus could come, take that promise, and keep it through. So, that Jesus could become the son of David and then that verse becomes true that his house is established forever. It is only established in Christ. But as far as David's sons were concerned, they didn't see the promise fulfilled for them although that promise hangs before them. I believe that if every son of David had

followed the Lord fully, they would have a continuous line of blessings.

The reason for the fall of Israel is not that God planned it but the men failed God. The promises of God whether the prophecies are positive or negative are always conditional, even if it was not mentioned that there are no conditions. You may have a prophecy for your life that says, "I have chosen you to be My ambassador to twenty nations. I have chosen you from your mother's womb. All these gifts shall be upon your life." No conditions are mentioned. But if you didn't live right with God, you didn't walk with God, not a single one of those prophecies will come to pass. No conditions are mentioned there. But it is conditional. It's the second law that governs general prophecy. All prophecy is conditional. That is why we need to take prophecy more seriously. If the prophecy really came from the Lord and if you ever hear from the Lord, you have to take it seriously because it is not going to come to pass if you are lazy and rebellious. And it will not come to pass until you get right with God. Just imagine how many thousands of prophecies have been uttered to the body of Christ but only a small percentage of them are coming to pass in the lives of just a few. What happened to the rest? They are not coming to pass because the rest think the prophecies are unconditional. They think that they just have to sit down, shake their legs and not do anything about the prophecies. They are sadly mistaken.

A prophecy, like dreams and visions, is just a seed. A seed needs to be nourished. Suppose you give me a seed and said this seed is from a most delicious mango. After I planted it, if I don't take care of the plant and water it at all, the fruit will not turn out to be as good, luscious and tasty like its parent fruit. If I continue to neglect it, the fruit will continue to be underdeveloped. I can't complain because I didn't do my responsibility. As long as man has a free choice, all prophetic utterances come under law No. 2 it's always conditional. Therefore Paul says to Timothy, "Meditate on these things that by them you can wage a good warfare."

## **Prophecy is Relational**

The third characteristic of general prophecy is a vital point. No. 1 we have said that it is fractional. No.2 it is conditional and No. 3 it is relational. Being relational means that when God gives a prophecy whether to you personally or to deliver to the body of Christ, it is not given so that you can boast about it, be puffed up, and say with pride, "I got this revelation." It is relational, that it is related to the

environment that you are in.

I have to bring more scriptures to substantiate this point and bring it through. It's just like for example Daniel. Do you notice all the prophecies he received concerned world affairs and political events that were in his time and after his time? Look at his profession. He was called to be a prophet. He was a Prime Minister in a sense. When he was in the Babylonian Empire, king Nebuchadnezzar promoted him to be one of the top men. When he was in the Persian Empire he also was there standing in the administrative affairs. It was one of the largest kingdoms. We know that Daniel had a lot of duties. He had a lot of political work involved in his duties as a Prime Minister in the daily affairs of the kingdom. In relation to his work, God revealed the kingdom affairs. See prophecy is relational. We'll apply that afterwards.

Let me give more scriptures. In the book of I Sam. 3 notice that Samuel was chosen to establish a kingdom in Israel. He was the transition between the judges and the kingship. And in his role, he was a priest, a prophet and a judge. He stood on three anointing, which was very rare in those days. David stood in two. He was a prophet and a king. See even in the Old Testament some people have more than one mantle. Samuel had three mantles on his life. The anointing to be a judge is a kingly anointing. And so, we see that the anointing of priest, prophet and king was on his life and he prophesied on many things. There are certain prophecies that are recorded of his life. And I would go as far as to say this every prophecy in his life is related to the kingdom and to the world. All his prophecies were about king Saul and about David. See God used him as far as the kingdom is concerned. It is related to his work, to his environment and therefore it was necessary for him to have prophecies and revelations in that area. See God does not call us to be busy bodies. God will not reveal to you something that will happen in the North Pole if it is not related to you at all. Every thing that God does in your life in revelations, in dreams and visions has a specific purpose. And the purpose is related to your environment that you are in. It's important for Daniel for what he received because he was involved in the transition of kingdoms. It is important for Samuel to receive what he received and understood because he was involved in setting up kings.

Let's look at another man David. David is a king and a prophet and those were his two mantles. Did you notice of all of prophecies about Jesus Christ as King and Messiah given by all the prophets in the Old Testament, David had the most prophecies?

*Psalms 24:8-10 Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! Now this is about the Lord Jesus Christ. Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors! That the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.*

*Psalms 29:1 Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe the Lord the glory of his name; worship the Lord in holy array. Verse 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars. Verse 8 The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness. Verse 10 The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.*

Now all these points to prophecies about Jesus. I could give you Psalms after Psalms because David's vocation and profession was a king so he had relational prophecies about the coming King of glory, Jesus Christ. David was in a position to understand the kingship and as a prophet, he was giving out of that kind of prophecies in Psalms. There are many such prophecies in the Psalms. Even Acts 2 the quotation of his prophecies was relational. See he was a king. He sat on the throne. And the prophecies he received was related to his position that God has placed him in.

When we understand this third law of prophecy then we understand that when you received a word from the Lord it would usually be relational to your life in different ways. Either at some point in the future you will be involved in that kind of thing indirectly or directly, through your life or through your influence. Or you are already in that kind of situation. Sometimes you received a prophecy in those areas because it's relational to your future work. So, you may see some thing in the body of Christ that needs correction. But it's not time to do that neither do you have the knowledge and the wisdom to carry it out. But you see things that are not done. You may be involved in those things. It's relational. Or you may already be in a position related to this areas like you are already involved in church work and you receive prophetic utterances in those areas.

Now these four points we covered relates to all revelation too. These laws that apply to prophecies applies to all revelation that you received. That is here you are involved in church work. Maybe you are involved in church planting. Definitely because of your work in that area, when ecstatic utterances are brought forth it will

flow from your position there. And you will be in a position to receive prophecies in relation to that. Like for example if any Tom, Dick and Harry come to me and said, "I have this prophecy about what God is going to do all over the world." There are two things that come to my mind. First of all, is this guy related to that prophecy in any way? If this person has no future work in that area or is not involved in that work at the moment that the prophecy is received, then his prophecy would be very inaccurate. It will be inaccurate in its interpretation and its application. Some times, it may not even be from the Lord. Remember the first two points it is fractional. The person received a part of it only if it's really from the Lord. But usually because that person is not related that kind of situation, that person's interpretation is totally out. His interpretation can even turn out to be the opposite of what will really happen. This is why we need to understand this characteristic of prophecy. Let me give an example. If a person's prophesies that such-and-such a thing is going to happen to the body of Christ all over the world and if he is not in church work nor called to church work at all, his prophecy would have to be submitted to someone in that position to interpret it in fullness.

Secondly, If it were from the Lord, it would be fractional. That person's prophecy would not be as accurate as some one who is already in the church work and has himself received a word about what is happening in the body of Christ. And when both prophecies were given, people will sense the difference. One has an element of accuracy and solidness and the other hangs out empty. If it's not from the Lord, then this person just heard wrongly. If it's from the Lord, then we apply the second sub-law to this third law of relational prophecy. That person's prophecy needs to be re-interpreted in the right context. So when you understand these laws God will never give you a prophecy out of the blue where you will come and predict judgment upon the church. You have never been involved in church work nor are you going to be involved at all. Or predict some thing wrong. I see some thing wrong in this church or in that church. Your seeing is partly natural. See it's relational. But if it's a person is already in church work or going to move into it some time in the future, the reason God showed that is that person would be involved in that situation. God doesn't speak a judgment or some thing bad happening without you going to turn it around.

All prophecies are conditional whether it is positive or negative and it is conditioned on man's response. Some people not understanding this take it negatively all the time. And it looks like the one who could see the most things becomes the most spiritual prophet. That's not the way God designed prophecy to be. God in no way will allow prophecy to build a person's ministry or prestige or status. The reason God reveals some thing to any individual is because it's related

to that person working in that situation. Or that person has some influences to bear in that situation. Or that person is going to move into that situation in the future to change it or to bring it to pass. God does not give us a prophecy to make us to be busybodies. "O, what is God doing in the Amazon jungles? He is doing such-and-such a thing there. What is God doing in the North Pole? Well He is going to evangelize this and that. What is God going to do in the church? He is going to do this and that." It makes you a super-spiritual busybody, prophesying in areas where you know not.

So all prophecies are relational. From which prospective are you receiving it? I would have no word from the Lord for any country or nation that I am not involved with. I may see in general but I would have nothing involved in that unless I am in the position to minister in some form in that area then it becomes clearer. From a general perspective, I would have a general perspective and develop in the area of prophesying because of the general position in the body of Christ in the five-fold ministry. But I would have no specific prophecy until God calls me into a nation to do some thing there. See the specific only comes if you are involved. God doesn't waste time. God doesn't just give out information for the sake of a spiritual newspaper to read just for fun what is happening here and what is happening there. Every revelation has a purpose to change life, influence lives or to bring us into a position to do some thing in that area.

Samuel could identify lost donkeys - he did at one time. But the lost donkey was related to getting a king for Israel. You remember that Saul lost his donkey. There could be twenty thousand donkeys lost that day. God is not interested in all the nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety nine donkeys. The reason why He reveals the lost and found donkey is because Saul lost it and Saul was the future king. Every work that Samuel was involved in was relational to his role as kingmaker. The prophecies he received were relational.

Look at Elijah - why did he go and stop the rain? It was relational to his work and his task as a prophet to bring judgment to that nation. It is relational. God doesn't make a person a busybody. He does not appoint busybodies. They usually are self-appointed.

On the positive side, the question is asked: Is there then room for any member of the body of Christ to receive a prophecy? There is but you have to bring it into the

interpretation of those who are there. God can give a word to anybody. Lets say God gave you a word about the North Pole evangelism but you have never gone to the North Pole and you have a certain prediction about that place. You have to bring your prediction to those who would be involved in that work.

In the book of Acts 21:4 *And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit, they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.* Now these are disciples who are baptized in the Holy Spirit. They have probably received a prophecy about Paul. They receive a prophecy about danger. Now they are not involved in the work like Paul was involved. He was already encountering danger any way wherever he went. So, they took upon themselves to give the interpretation that Paul was not supposed to go. It says, *Through the Spirit, they told Paul not to go to Jerusalem.* These people told Paul very clearly not to go. It is said they even spoke through the Spirit. So another way we can phrase this is, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, don't go." They said, "It through the Spirit." And they were wrong. See it needs to be submitted to Paul who was the one involved. They were not involved in that situation of going to Jerusalem.

If you have a prophecy about me it has to be submitted to me for my interpretation not yours. If I have a prophecy about you I will have to take the position where I will deliver the prophecy to you but its up to you to add further light and revelation and interpretation that you could see because you are the one involved not me. I am only receiving fractional prophecy and you may be receiving other fractional prophecy. Perhaps a little bit of my fractional prophecy will add to your collective prophecies and make the jigsaw puzzle clearer.

See these laws go one after the other. Because of the fact that the prophecy was fractional, the disciple only saw the danger part of the prophecy and they thought that was the whole picture. So they arrived at the conclusion that Paul shouldn't go. Paul saw that fraction. But he saw more than that fraction. He was involved in it anyway. He was heavily involved in work that is close to death, stoned, beaten, he was closed to death many times. He was not afraid of death anyway since he had many brushes with death. Just as Jesus' face was set on Jerusalem to suffer at the hands of the elders and Sanhedrin, so likewise was Paul's face set on Jerusalem to bear witness to the Name of Jesus. Paul had the larger picture.

So, honor these principles. I have to honor it in your life when I give a prophecy to



allow you to have freedom to choose, to flow along, with the prophetic interpretation in our life. In the same way if I travel to another church to minister there and I prophesy to the church, do you know that my prophecy for that church has to in the end be submitted to whoever is involved in building that church for a total interpretation? God doesn't give us a prophecy to be a busybody. He gives a prophecy for us to be involved in it in some way. If you are in that position where there don't seem to be any relationship between you and the prophecy and if it's from the Lord, you have to bring it to the person involved in that prophecy. Let those involved take it as a fraction from you and fit their own whole jigsaw puzzle. You withhold your interpretation and don't jump into any conclusion because what you have is only a fraction of the whole. Those involved would probably have more fractions than you. They would see the whole picture clearer. So, it's a law of submission to one another.

So, this third law of relational prophecy is important. Otherwise, we would think that we are like big bosses going around just because we prophesy or move into ecstatic utterances. We think that every one has to abide by our command. There is no reason why I should pray to God and help you find lost things in your life. Perhaps you lost a key. You say, "Brother pray for me. Do you have any word where it is?" Generally, I would say no. But supposing that I have never met you before and you have lost an important key. The Lord tells me where the key is but the reason for locating the key for you is make it a sign to you. You could be questioning the Lord in some areas of your life. A relationship between you and me is formed when the lost key is found. Then the Lord begins to use me to reveal other things that He is dealing with your life. You are surprised and asked, "How do you know?" Because of the accuracy of the prophecies, you know that this must be from God and He is dealing with your life and you must change.

See there are reasons to it. God doesn't just get into the business of finding lost things. In your personal life, you can pray for all things. Trust God for all things whether it is lost keys or all things trust the Lord. But I am talking about giving a word. Prophetic utterance must be submitted under the third law. It is relational to any work concerned. It doesn't just hang by itself like a sore thumb. Our fingers look lovely but if you just cut one finger off and stick it to a plant, it looks ugly by itself. But if fitted to the palm it looks lovely. So it's important for us to see that any prophecy given must be relational to the giver of the prophecy.

In Acts 21 Agabus came in verse 10 and 11 *While we were staying for some days, a*

*prophet name Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us he took Paul's girdle and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this girdle and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.* And in verse 12 everybody told him don't go. They misinterpreted the prophecy. It applies to Paul it doesn't apply to them. So, they should have submitted the final interpretation to Paul. But they tried to ask Paul not to go. See they took one fraction of that prophecy. Paul saw the other parts that they did not see. And they did not submit it to Paul at first. They interpreted it, and told Paul not to go, danger, danger, don't go. It's not what God was saying. That was a part of what God was saying. But their interpretation and conclusion was wrong.

Lets say if I had a prophecy about Timbuktu. I don't have any sort of work there in any direct way. If I have received any prophecy and truly, it's from the Lord, I should let those who are there interpret the word of prophecy. The one fraction of word that I received may be interpreted out of context if seen by itself. Any thing seen by itself can be easily put out of context. It's the easiest thing to misinterpret anything that is by itself. Take one jigsaw puzzle by itself and you see one green little thing at the corner. It could be a plant, or it could be a part of a flower. You don't know what it is until you fit it with another piece then you see it's a plant. It's the easiest thing to misinterpret a fraction of prophecy. Think about it. It's always in fractions.

I have heard many prophecies that are given that are out of context; in the same way, bible verses are taken out of context. You could pull one bible verse out of its original context in the Bible by letting it hang loosely. This is not right. This is the same way some people pull one part of the prophecy without allowing it to come to the whole to see the whole picture. They forget that all prophecy is relational.

In Acts 11, we read how Agabus had a prophecy about a famine. Agabus signified by the Spirit in Acts 11 about a famine coming, which according to Luke, came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. What is the reason for that prophecy? So that they would sit around and shake legs and say, "Praise God, there is a famine coming"? That prophecy was for them to do some thing. They were going to be involved in helping those who would suffer by the famine. It is always relational. God doesn't waste time like human beings do. Every precious revelation or prophecy He gives has a purpose and has meaning in the lives of the people who give it and the lives of the people who receive it. It's only when some Christians who are still in the flesh prophesy a lot of things that has nothing to do with their

lives or with the persons who hear it.

Beside that, sometimes, even if the prophecy is really from the Lord, the attitude in the giving the prophecy may be wrong. Some don't understand that prophecy is both fractional and relational and since they have nothing to do with it, they have to submit it to someone who has something to do with it for its final interpretation. Let's look at it this way. If somebody else has three pieces of the jigsaw and I have one, who would see a clearer picture? It would definitely be the guy who has three pieces. All of us are not all things. We all are a small part in the body of Christ. So there are some parts in the body of Christ that may see better than others. But there are some parts that others may see better than them. Unless we learn to flow in this context, we will always move into the wrong place in the body, places that we shouldn't be in or claiming authority that we don't have. If I have one piece and that guy has three pieces, I would bring that one piece to that guy and say, "You have the three pieces there. Put this there and tell me what the full meaning is. I only have this and if I interpret it would be slightly off." Wouldn't that be a better attitude than for each one who holds one piece and says, "I got it. I got the whole picture." It's important for us to see that prophecy is fractional, prophecy is conditional and prophecy is relational.

## **Prophecy is Directional**

Then we have in the book of Acts the fourth area that prophecy is directional. We have seen part of it in Acts 11 that it has to do with the body of Christ there. The reason why God revealed that famine was coming to the church of Antioch is so that the church of Antioch can do something. And they did. Every prophecy in this bible always brings a direction. It doesn't hang loose by itself. They always bring a direction and a conclusion to the whole situation. Every prophecy that is given will relate to the person who is giving it in life or in influence. That means you may directly have something to do with it or you may be an influence in affecting it in other people's life. God has no business in revealing something to you if you are not going to get involved with it. Either in actual work or in influence or in some way God will have you involved it's directional, it directs people's life.

I Kings 13 here is an unknown unnamed prophet, which the bible doesn't give his name. And this man of God came all the way from Judah to the North. Israel was divided into the Northern and Southern kingdom. The North was idolatrous, he

came to the North, and he prophesied against the altar that was made by the king. And he says this altar shall be destroyed.

I King 13:3 *And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign that the Lord has spoken: Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.* King Jeroboam was there and he said, "Arrest him." When he said, "Arrest him," his hands couldn't come back. And the man of God had to pray for his hands to come back. That was a fantastic sign. God's power was there. Then this prophet has finished his ministry and work in that area and as he went back.

In verse 8 *And the man of God said to the king, "If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you. And I will not eat bread or drink water in this place; for so was it commanded me by the word of the Lord, saying, "You shall neither eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way that you came."*

Notice this was the prophecy that this man had. He has to go there prophesy and not even take one bite of food and he is to go by a different way back. On his way back in verse 11 there was an old prophet. We could paraphrase it and say that he was a retired prophet. That means he no more prophesies. But he was a prophet so he retains the title old prophet. And his sons came in and told him of the man of God. They chased after him and in verse 14 and he says, "Are you the man of God." He says, "I am." "Come home with me and eat bread," the retired prophet said to the young prophet. The man of God said the same thing, "The Lord said, 'You should not eat bread nor drink there nor return by going the way you came.'" And in verse 18, the retired prophet said, "I am also a prophet. An angel spoke to me told me to take care of you." The bible says here at the end that he lied. That retired prophet was lying. And it says in the next verse he went back with him. He ate bread in his house and drank water. In verse 20 it happened as he sat on the table eating then the word of the Lord came to the prophet who brought him to his house. Suddenly the anointing came back on the retired prophet. Now he had earlier told lies. Suddenly this word came to the retired prophet and said to the young prophet, "You are going to die." What an odd story the bible has here.

But this is the principle we are drawing. Every prophecy is relational that means it's in the context of what the background you are in or spiritual position you are in. Suppose you are a babe in Christ and receive two separate prophecies, one from somebody who is walking with God and another, an old leader who is not spiritual

anymore. All things being equal, the former prophecy would be more accurate than that the latter. So it's relational to the spiritual position and background and some times the work that God calls you to.

The fourth point is that it's directional in the sense that if the one who brings forth that prophetic utterance is not involved directly, then his very own life would be prophetically involved. What does this mean? That means his very own person is the message of the prophecy. This man the young prophet brought the prophecy of judgment that Israel was symbolically judged must now show forth in his person the work and the wrath of judgment on that country. The reason why God told him not to eat bread or drink water is because he will not touch anything that is condemned to judgment in that country. The young prophet represents the life of that prophecy. He is the mouthpiece to give and live that prophecy. Judgment was pronounced on the whole nation, even its bread and water. Every morsel of bread or cup of water that he received means he is not living that prophecy he prophesied. He is not consistent with it. So as he moved out and he was tricked into doing that. He should have realized that the fourth law of prophecy is directional, even to his own person.

This probably seldom happens but let's suppose that it happened. Let's suppose that you went into a city to do a ministry and God especially chose you from the day you were born. You did your best and there is some acceptance but plenty of rejection. The time comes to end and God tells you, "All right, it is time to leave." As you leave God tells you shake the dust from your feet as a sign of judgment for the rejection. And as you walked out after shaking the dust off your feet, some people call out to you, "Why don't you come to this tourist shop and take home a few souvenirs?" And you turn back and said, "O.K." Look, you are being inconsistent. You shook the dust and pronounced judgment and here you are taking things from the city where you pronounced judgment. All prophecy will always be directional where it affects the life of the one who gives it forth. Or through the one who gives it forth there is supposed to be an influence in that area. But it will be inconsistent with the life.

So having that background, you see this young prophet coming to the Northern kingdom and prophesying judgment. He was told specifically not to eat or drink in that place. And as he walked out of that place, an old retired prophet comes in with a false word. He should have easily judged it. That word is contradictory to what he had received. Not only whether you hear a word or not the first law would have

protected you. To know that it is directional. If I give a prophecy, my life must direct it. In the old, they go further than they do in the new. When Hosea prophesied about Israel who abandoned God when God loves so much, his marriage became a symbol. See his whole life became involved in that prophecy. When Isaiah and Ezekiel prophesied their whole life were directed. They lived for the prophecy. In a sense, they lost their life. Their life is for the prophecy and they are the personification of the prophecy. See the prophecies we give forth must be personified in our life's style, in our influence. The consistency must be there. There must be a change that comes.

If you prophesy of a tremendous influx of wrong things that are going to come to the world's T.V. channels and you own a T.V. then you are not consistent. I doubt your prophecy. Can you see the relationship? No one can carry a true prophecy in that direction and then buy a T.V. So there must be consistency if it's a true prophecy. It's one of the important laws that judge a prophecy in the final end. A prophecy always changes and directs a person's life or life's style and affects that very person. Your prophetic word becomes only a portion of what is in you.

Let's look at Joseph. He had a prophecy in a sense by the dreams he received. In a sense, the dreams he received were prophetic. He had two dreams that he told his brothers in Genesis chapter 37. One prophecy was about his brothers bowing to him. The other prophecy was about all of his family, including his parents, bowing to him. Why did God give it to him? It is because his life was involved with his families. Because he was in Egypt later on and he was the instrument for the salvation of the Hebrew family. See God doesn't waste time. He doesn't appoint busybodies.

## **Growing in the Prophetic**

All prophecies are fractional, conditional, relational and directional. These are the four characteristics of all general prophecies. How do we receive and grow in prophecy? It is the same laws that apply to the others. Live a life of praise and worship. David became a prophetic king because he was one who was a psalmist. And through the ministry of a psalmist, he received the psalms from God that contained a lot of prophetic utterances. A life of praise and worship always leads to prophetic utterance. When the church in Acts 13 ministered to the Lord the Holy Spirit said some thing, "Bring me Paul and Barnabas," verse 2 of Acts 13. So, when

people minister to the Lord they place themselves in a position to receive from the Lord. Live a life of praise and worship.

Secondly, live a life of prayer and fasting. One of the key failures in the body of Christ is when we don't understand a passage of a scripture, we run to man after man to interpret for us. But we fail to bring that scripture to God and say God, "Lord, I am going to fast and pray about this scripture would You please reveal it to me." Or we run from one commentary to the other and never run to the Lord who wrote it. There will be and there will continue to be many things in the Word that we don't understand fully because we have fractional understanding. But each time you come across one you could bring it to the Lord in prayer and fasting.

For example, take the life of Daniel. When he receives some things he did not understand, he always fasted and prayed for an understanding. Whatever could be revealed would be revealed to him. That will bring you into the position of prophetic utterance and understanding. If you understand these four laws that govern prophetic utterances, you will be protected from a lot of abuse. And it's an important area to get into. It's the starting point. When you begin to receive utterances from God and when you prophesy to yourself, write down what you can. Be opened to persons with the genuine gift of prophecy and build it into one piece for behind it is the will of God being unfolded in your life. Remember all prophecy is fractional, conditional, relational and directional and it will involve your own life.